

The Prince of Peace

ISAIAH CHAPTERS SEVEN, EIGHT, AND NINE TO VERSE SEVEN

These chapters are very much about Christ—

7: “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son . . .”

8: “I and the children Yahweh hath given me . . .”

9: “Unto us a child is born . . .”

It was in the time of king Ahaz of Judah, son of the good Jotham, father of the good Hezekiah. Ahaz himself is pictured as the worst king Judah ever had, even worse over-all than Manasseh—

“He made molten images for Baalim . . . He burnt in-cense in the valley of the son of Hinnom . . . HE BURNT HIS CHILDREN IN THE FIRE after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out”

(2 Chr. 28:2-3).

Yet it was to him that these marvelous prophecies were given.

It was about 730 BC: three hundred years after David’s day. Under Uzziah and Jotham (who preceded him), Judah had been very strong. But under Ahaz, God brought it very low. Syria defeated him and carried away a great multitude of captives, and took much territory. Israel fought him, and slew 120,000 in one day. Edom smote him and carried away captives. The Philistines took away much of his land (2 Kgs. 16:6; 2 Chr. 28:5-6, 17-20).

As Isaiah chapter 7 opens, Syria and Israel (v. 1) have combined to finally crush Judah and set up their own king there, and it appears many in Judah itself were sympathetic to this design. Ahaz and all the people are deathly afraid (v. 2). At this point, God sends Isaiah to tell Ahaz not to fear (v. 3). God had used Israel and Syria to punish wicked Judah, but when they plan to destroy the House of David and set up their own king (v. 6), they went too far. Even heathen rulers, when in their conquests they appointed kings of Judah, kept to the royal line of the House of David. This would be God’s over-ruling Providence, because of His promise.

Ahaz is assured (v. 8) that within sixty-five years, Ephraim (Israel) would be completely blotted out. Actually the nation was destroyed as such, and much of the people carried captive to Assyria within fifteen years, in the early years of Ahaz’s son Hezekiah, but many were left, who later mocked the appeals of Hezekiah (2 Chr. 30:10). The sixty-five years include later attritions by Assyria, and the bringing in by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon of an alien people to fill the land (who became known as the Samaritans).

“If ye (Ahaz) will not believe (this promise of protection and deliverance), surely ye shall not be established” (v. 9).

Judah was in terrible straits: powerless, greatly diminished, and threatened with extinction. Faith at such a time was difficult, especially for a wicked and faithless man like Ahaz: so God made him a tremendous offer never made to anyone else, before or since—

“Ask ANY SIGN YOU WISH: in the depth, or in the height” (v. 11).

But Ahaz said: “I will not tempt the Lord” (v. 12). This was absolute hypocrisy. He did not *want* the sign. He did not want to believe. He did not want to submit to God, which accepting the offer would involve. He wanted to go his own way. God was very angry (v. 13). Then, surprisingly, comes one of the major prophecies of the entire Scriptures—

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL” (v. 14).

It is notable (v. 13) that God had addressed Ahaz as the “House of David.” As an individual he was a miserable nothing, but officially he comprised in his day the House of David, which is great in

God's Purpose. This sign was the sign of all signs to that House. Hezekiah would be about ten years old at this time, and would very likely be present. It was a Sign for all generations: especially those since its fulfillment in Christ.

This unique event of all history—the central Key to the Divine Plan—was hinted at from the very beginning, in the Promise to Eve that the Savior of mankind should be the Seed of the *Woman*, rather than of the *Man*. But it had never before been plainly expressed.

And not only was he to be the child of a virgin (a special creation, outside the course of nature): he was to be more—his Name was to be Immanuel: “*God With Us*”: the Divine Mystery of God-Manifestation, first in Christ, then in a multitude of his brethren.

“*Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good*” (v. 15).

It is notable that the Child of the virgin had to go through a process of learning to enable him to refuse evil and choose good. It is also notable that he was potentially able to choose the evil. Neither of this could possibly be true of an eternal, omnipotent “trinitarian” god pretending to be a man. God knows all things eternally; God cannot be tempted.

The meaning of “butter and honey” is clear from the fact that they are what gave Christ the knowledge to choose the way of right. That can only be the Word of God. There are many references in Scripture to eating, digesting, assimilating and ruminating upon the Word, so the figure is both clear and familiar. Honey is the sweetness, butter is the richness, of the Word. The Spirit of Christ in the Psalms says—

“*Thy words are sweeter than honey to my mouth*” (119:103).

We are familiar with the expression: “The sincere (pure) *milk of the Word*.” Butter, of course, is the best and richness of the milk. In the Song of Songs, the Bridegroom says to the Bride—

“*Honey and milk are under thy tongue*” (4:11).

—referring to speaking in pure harmony with the Word and mind of God. Christ alone perfectly fulfilled this choosing of good and refusing of evil. *That perfection* was the heart and essence of his power and his victory: his outstanding characteristic and qualification. No one has ever approached near to him in this respect.

“*Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings*” (v. 16).

What land and what kings? It might appear to refer to Syria and Israel, the then combined enemy. And doubtless it did refer to them in an immediate sense. But their two separate kingdoms did not constitute a “land” or “nation.” And clearly, in speaking of Christ, and of events seven hundred years distant, God is speaking on a larger scale. The land “abhorred” or despised by the faithless Ahaz was the Land: and before the infancy of Christ, both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah should be terminated, and so they were. In the Divine Purpose, Syria was a non-entity. The two wicked kings were those of Israel *and Judah*: including Ahaz himself. This would appear clear from the next verse—

“*The Lord shall bring upon THEE, and THY people, and THY house*” (v. 17).

And what was the Lord to bring? “The king of Assyria.” At this time, about 730 BC, under the mighty Tiglath-pileser, or Pul, Assyria's last great period of power began, until it declined about 650 BC, and Babylon destroyed Nineveh in 612 BC. This immediate period contains the first scriptural reference to Assyria since Genesis (except Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24: 22 - 24).

In rejection of the Immanuel Sign was the beginning of the end of the nation's entity, just as the rejection of Immanuel himself was the culmination of that end. Ahaz, faced with the greatest offer of evidence ever made by God, chose to reject God and rely on man. He called on Assyria to help him (2 Kgs. 16:7). This was a fatal step. Judah never again was truly free from the dark shadow of foreign domination (though under Josiah, when Assyria weakened, there was practical independence, for a twilight period, in the closing mercies of God on the nation).

But for Ahaz, the helper immediately became the master. The call for help was an offer of submission and vassalage. It is possible Ahaz had already made contact with Assyria, when Isaiah brought the Divine message. It appears certain that the course was at least in his mind and determination. So it was decreed that his sin should be his downfall, and his unholy alliance should become his bondage—

“The Lord shall bring upon thee . . . the king of Assyria” (v. 17).

Little did Ahaz realize the dreadful scourge he had called forth.

God refers (v. 18) to the Assyrian and Egyptian armies He would bring, as bees and flies. Not the mild flies as we know them, but a voracious devouring insect that constituted one of the deadly plagues, and is to this day a terrible scourge in Africa. And not our relatively mild bees, but the lethal wild killer bees of Africa and the Mideast, which attack without provocation anything that moves, and that are today an imported and growing plague in South America. There is clearly an interesting relation of thought between the famed honey of the Holy Land—both temporal and spiritual—and the fierce, God-sent Assyrian bees which would take it all away.

“The Lord shall shave with a hired razor, even the king of Assyria” (v. 20).

To shave is to make absolutely bare, to utterly remove the glory, for hair and beard are symbols of beauty and dignity. To shave is to purify, as the Nazarite and leper (Num. 6: 18; Lev. 14: :8).

Ahaz himself had hired the razor, robbing the Temple to raise the tribute (2 Kgs. 16:8), so this was the instrument God used for his and Judah’s punishment. There is a powerful lesson for all here. In perfect justice God allows our own wilfulness and folly to chasten us, and (hopefully) to teach us the wisdom that *exactly* as we sow, we reap.

The rest of this chapter (Isa. 7:21-25) is both interesting and obscure. Clearly it speaks of the desolation of the land, and the coming of invaders. But it also obviously speaks in veiled language of spiritual things: promise as well as judgment—a remnant that prospers in a certain way amid the general desolation; a fruitfulness amid a barrenness.

“It shall come to pass in that day (the day of heathen oppression), that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep” (v. 21).

“Young cow” is “heifer” elsewhere, and our minds go to the “red heifer” whose sacrificial ashes cleansed from defilement: clearly a type of Jesus. *“And two sheep”*: the two folds of the faithful that make up the one true flock.

The *“butter and honey”* (v. 22) that all the remnant eat who remain *“in the land”* must be the same butter and honey that guided and nourished Immanuel in verse 15.

The *“briars and thorns”* are the wicked nation, reverted to its fierce and useless and destructive natural animal state. *“Briars and thorns”* is a common scriptural symbol of wild and unfruitful people, especially those upon whom cultivation has been expended without result (v. 23).

The *“arrows and bows”* (v. 24) are the invaders God sends upon the land because of the briar-and-thorn condition.

But still (v. 25) *above* the lower level of briars and thorns that cover the land in general, *“hills”* arise that are diligently cultivated and productive, and where the briars and thorns cannot come and are not feared. These little hills of faithful fruitfulness in the general barrenness of the nation, are for the *“sending forth of oxen,”* the zealously laboring apostles and preachers of the Gospel. And the *“lesser cattle”* (Revised Version: sheep) are the flock of the redeemed—

“Feed my sheep” (Jn. 21:16).

Chapter 8 begins a new but related matter. It deals with the birth of Isaiah’s second son (another sign), which is both a type of, and contrast with, the virgin’s son Immanuel.

“Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man’s pen” (v. 1).

Actually, it should be “tablet,” as in Revised Version, and not “roll.” And it should be “graving tool,” as it is translated in Exodus 32:4, not “pen.” It is a “great” tablet: it is important, and it must be clear and prominent.

“A MAN’S *graving tool*.” This is a direct contrast with Immanuel, whose graving was of God, and not man—

“Upon one stone shall be seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts. And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zech. 3:9).

No “man’s graving tool” could be used on God’s Altar (Ex. 20:25).

“Write concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz” (the son’s name: “Speed the spoil: hasten the prey.”) (v. 1).

And (v. 2) he took “faithful” (sure, dependable) witnesses, Ahaz’s own men, Uriah (2 Kgs. 16:10) and Zechariah (2 Chr. 29:1), for this was a sign to Ahaz. He went in unto the prophetess (v. 3), and she bore him a son, to be named Maher-shalal-hash-baz. In less than two years (v. 4), before this child could say “Mother” or “Father,” the king of Assyria would subdue and plunder both Syria and Israel. This would be of God, *without* Ahaz making himself dependent on Assyria. Ahaz need but trust and wait. But he did not. He trusted on the cruel and treacherous Assyrians, the power of the world, rather than on the living and faithful God. So God continues—

“Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly . . . the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river (the Euphrates) . . . even the king of Assyria” (vs. 6-7).

The “waters of Shiloah” were Jerusalem’s water supply, arising from never-failing springs in the rock under the Temple area, between Mts. Zion and Moriah: the Royal mount and the Priestly mount. Shiloah means “Sent.” There is much significance and fitting type here. Clearly these gentle, steady, life-giving waters of the Holy City portray the Word—both written and incarnate. And the Name Shiloh or Shiloah is appropriately applied to Christ, who was “Sent” for Salvation and Life by the love of God to man. These waters, used exactly as instructed, in believing obedience to Christ, gave sight to the blind (Jn. 9:7).

The Euphrates goes back to the beginning of the Bible story. It was part of the life-giving waters of the Garden of Eden, and will be part of that Garden again. But in Isaiah’s day it was the enemy, the mighty Assyrian nation at crest-flood: a rushing, overflowing torrent, drowning all the surrounding nations.

The Assyrian was a military, plundering desolator, who boasted of his plundering (Isa. 10:13-14). In more recent times the overflowing Euphrates stood for another plundering desolator, the once-fearsome Turk now dried up and impotent, according to the infallible divine fiat.

Isaiah plainly told Ahaz (v. 8) what his newly-bought “friend” would do: overflow Judah “*even to the neck*,” and “*fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel*.” This he did in Ahaz’s son Hezekiah’s day, up to the neck, but the head was saved by the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army. This was typical of the victory of Messiah’s day, when the latter-day Assyrian would again overflow the land even to the neck. And the prophet looks forward to that time (v. 9), challenging the whole Assyrian world, in the spirit of Psalm 2, to associate against God’s King on His holy Zion hill, and declaring their utter destruction.

“Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought. Speak the word, and it shall not stand: for IMMANUEL—GOD IS WITH US!” (v. 10).

The struggle between the Assyrian and the Holy City has raged from that day to this, with the Assyrian always in the ascendancy. But Immanuel will at last prevail. It is the picture we find so often, as Micah 5—

“This Man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land. And when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight princes of men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword” (Mic. 5:5-6).

Beginning at verse 11, the chapter goes into spiritual things, and has largely to do with the mission of Christ, past and future—

“Walk not in the way of this people” (v. 11).

That is, Come out, be separate. The nation would reject Immanuel, as we see in the next few verses, but the faithful remnant is called out.

“Say ye not, A confederacy: neither fear ye their fear” (v. 12).

Heed no calls for defensive or apprehensive union with the worldly and ungodly; nor even fear the fears that motivate these moves. The flesh fears, and associates for strength. The people of God fear nothing, and have calm confidence; “Perfect love casteth out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18).

Keep separate, and (v. 13) *“Sanctify”* (that is, promote the holiness on earth of) the Lord, by *your* separateness and holiness, and make Him alone your (reverential and circumspect) fear.

Clearly Isaiah is looking forward prophetically to the time under Christ when the Covenant will not be national but individual: a great change for Israel, so rooted in their national privilege.

“And he shall be for a sanctuary” (v. 14).

A Sanctuary is a place of God’s appointment where He is manifested, and can be approached in worship. Here is the Mystery of God-Manifestation. The Sanctuary, or Dwelling-place, of God is Christ; first personal, then multitudinous. Isaiah is foretelling the Word made flesh.

“A sanctuary—but a stone of stumbling to both the houses of Israel” (v. 14).

And so he was, and has been ever since. It is the tragedy of Israel. The rejected Cornerstone (Psa. 118:22), the Precious Stone of God’s engraving (Zech. 3:9) to which the cries of “Grace!” will ascend (Zech. 4:7).

“And many shall stumble, and fall, and be broken”

(v. 15).

—even the whole nation, unto this day.

“Bind up the testimony; seal the law among my disciples” (v. 16).

To bind up and seal is to guard and preserve, to defend and maintain, to keep from change or corruption or loss. The nation would be lost, but not the Law and the Testimony, nor the eternal Divine Purpose. In Messiah’s day, as the nation was cast aside, the Law and Testimony were especially “bound up and sealed” by the Holy Spirit: guiding the apostles in all truth in their preaching and writing, and causing to be completed—and sealed as complete (Rev. 22:19)—the whole “Volume of the Book” which is our inestimable treasure unto this day.

“I will WAIT upon the Lord, Who hath hidden His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look (or watch) for Him” (v. 17).

As the great majority turn from God, and God in retribution hides His face from them, this is the faithful remnant, represented by the prophet, *waiting* in patience, and *watching* in faithfulness, regardless of what others do, or of how many broaden the path, or fall away.

“Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts” (v. 18).

In the first instance, this applies to Isaiah and his day. His two sons, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, were signs to Israel, in their names and in the events surrounding them. Their names mean “A remnant shall return” and *“Speed the spoil, haste the prey.”* Here is both promise and judgment. The spoil is the riches taken; the prey are the people overcome. Even in this name of judgment there is promise, for these sons represent the mighty ones who will take the spoil and prey.

Isaiah includes himself in the sign: *“I and.”* His own name means “Salvation of God” or “God Saves,” and is simply another form of the elements of “Jesus” or “Joshua.” Isaiah held forth salvation to Israel, both temporal and eternal. They *could* be of the faithful returning remnant; they *could* share the glorious spoil of a world brought to submission to God.

Paul (Heb. 2:13) applies this verse directly to Christ and his brethren: *“I and the children whom God hath given me.”* They are the waiting and watching disciples, preserving the Testimony. And they are the “Sons” who shall be Signs and Wonders in Israel in the great coming Day of glory and manifestation as “Sons of God”—

“He shall see his seed (his sons brought forth in righteousness, born of baptism, then of the Spirit), he shall prolong his days” (Isa. 53:10).

Established in power in Jerusalem—the remnant returned, the spoil taken—they will be Signs and Wonders that neither scattered Israel nor the heathen Gentile world can then miss or ignore.

“He shall divide the SPOIL with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death” (Isa. 53:12).

So saith the Spirit of the suffering, dying, and then glorified Servant of Yahweh. And God through Zephaniah addresses the meek of the earth—

“Wait upon Me until the day that I rise up to the PREY, for My determination is to gather the nations, to pour on them My fierce anger” (Zeph. 3:8).

In verse 18, Isaiah and his sons were Signs and Wonders from God to Judah: evidence of God’s hand, and guidance from Him in the Way of right. In verse 19, Isaiah appeals to Judah not to listen to any other voice, to any of the wisdom of man, to any who claimed to have supernatural powers, or communications with the dead.

Ahaz was a pre-eminent sinner in this respect. He served other gods in abundance, and did all the superstitious abominations of the heathen. But the warning is for all time. To pretend special powers and/or to communicate with the dead is the stock in trade of all *man’s* religions. We see it particularly in Catholicism, with its professed priestly powers, and the dead guides they seek to and call “saints.” But it is not *just* Catholicism. It is universal, based on the superstition of dead “saints” and the immortality of the soul.

Verse 20 is one of the bulwarks of the Truth—

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

There are various translations of the latter part, but they signify the same, and, as usual, the Authorized Version expresses it best. We have the Word of God, and it is an inestimable treasure. It is our wisdom to use every opportunity we have to learn more of it, and to test *everyone* and *everything* by it.

It is easy to slip into the conceit that because we are Christadelphians, we are automatically on our way to life—a few accepted doctrines our painless privileged passport to perpetuity—and we do not need to *constantly* study and learn and check our course and conduct.

We must keep the Word pre-eminent. The scriptural picture is that the Word is essential *daily* food for the spiritual man within us, without which he will inevitably weaken and die. If God guides us in answer to our prayers, it will be through the Word. He has appointed *that* as the meeting-place with Him, and if we neglect that, we shall find Him nowhere.

“They shall pass through it hardly bestead (distressed) and hungry: and they shall curse their King and their God” (v. 21).

Isaiah is clearly speaking of those mentioned throughout the chapter as rejecting the Word and stumbling at the Stumbling-stone. But to what time or occasion does it apply? In the first instance to the terrible calamities inflicted by Assyria, warned of in verse 8. Though Hezekiah and Jerusalem were saved, and the few chosen in the city, the whole country was devastated and thoroughly looted. Sennacherib claims to have carried off 200,000 captives from Judah on just one occasion, and incalculable amounts of cattle and spoil. Doubtless cursing their King and their God, and vainly “looking upward” for deliverance occurred many times over in these dark times, and those that followed.

But its ultimate and major fulfillment was in the rejecting and cursing of their Messiah, who was their God-appointed King, and *Immanuel*: “God with us”— “*God manifest in the flesh*” (1 Tim. 3:16). The chapter ends—

“ . . . dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness (v. 22).

Darkness fell over the land at the coming of the gentile destroyers and the complete obliteration of the Kingdom of God: darkness in many ways for: “The sun went down over the prophets, and it was dark unto them”—as Micah (3:6) (who prophesied at this same time) foretells. For over four hundred years there was no word at all from God.

* * *

Chapter 9 is a new beginning: a wonderful new beginning: *the* new beginning. Verse 1: Zebulon and Naphtali—the land of Galilee—suffered the most and the longest in the heathen invasions. They were the gateway to the land, and took the full brunt of the invader every time. The darkness struck them first and hardest, but it was to them that the Light most especially came.

Immanuel’s home and headquarters were in Galilee. Most of his labors were there. Most of his followers were Galileans, and to speak with Galilean accent was to identify one as associated with him, as we see in the case of Peter (Mk. 14:70). And the angel addressed the up-gazing disciples who watched him ascend, as “*Ye men of Galilee*” (Acts 1:11).

Galilee was known as “*Galilee of the Gentiles*” (Matt. 4:15), because of its mixed and cosmopolitan character, so different from the rigid and legalistic Jerusalem. Jesus’ seeming origin in, and association with, Galilee was a great stumbling-block to the Jewish leaders—

“Search and see: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (Jn. 7:52).

* * *

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light” (v. 2).

Matthew leaves no doubt of the meaning in telling us (4:16) that this Light was Immanuel in their midst.

“Thou hast multiplied the nation, and NOT increased the joy” (v. 3).

The margin give “to him” for “not,” and Revised Version follows this, though “not” is best supported textually, and it’s hard to see how “not” could creep in, if it were not the original, but the change the other way is easy.

If we accept the “not,” then it’s clearly a contrast of the *past* with the new joyful Light of righteousness. The nation had been “increased” in the past, as in the splendid days of Solomon, but without real and lasting joy, which can only be founded on righteousness. But *this* new Light of “God with us,” and what *he* accomplished, guarantees eternal joy: for the nation of Israel, and for the whole world.

“For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden . . . the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian” (v. 4).

The “days of Midian” refer back to the marvelous and typical victory of Gideon and his little band of three hundred (Jdgs. 7). “Thou *hast* broken” is certainly prophetic: the prophetic past speaking of the future, because of its surety in the Purpose of God. When the Great Light Immanuel had completed his mission in his first advent, and his death had been swallowed up in victory, the oppressor’s yoke was indeed broken. But this will not be consummated in its fulness until the last enemy, death, is destroyed at the millennium’s end (1 Cor. 15:26).

This verse refers, too, to the final destruction of the Assyrian on the mountains of Israel by Immanuel returned: the man who shall be the Peace when the Assyrian comes into the land for the last time (Mic. 5:5), for the next verses lead on into the glory of his Throne and Kingdom.

“For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but THIS shall be with burning and fuel of fire” (v. 5).

Here again, the detailed translations are various, and the Revised Version varies considerably, but the basic picture is clear. Here is the final worldwide conflict, when God sets His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2), when Christ descends from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance (2 Thess. 1:8), and when the King of kings and Lord of lords treads the winepress of the wrath of God (Rev. 19:15-16).

The Revised Version translation, which seems here to get closer to the sense, emphasizes the *result* of this climactic battle in the burning up of all the instruments of war: the removal of war from the earth.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (v. 6).

Here is the Hope of mankind—from among mankind, but by the special initiative of God, the special control and guidance of God, the special personal manifestation of God in a unique, chosen vessel from Adam’s fallen race. This is the great “Mystery of Godliness”—*Immanuel*—“God with us.” This appears in the wonderful names he bears.

“The government shall be upon his shoulder” (v. 6).

Here is the Son of David, to sit upon his regal throne, ruling from the River to the ends of the earth (Psa. 72:8). Here is the Seed of Abraham, to have universal dominion over his enemies, to possess their gates, and bring blessing to all the nations (Gen. 22:17-18).

“His name shall be called WONDERFUL” (v. 6).

No more fitting term could begin the description of him: his “Name” or character or identification. All God’s works are wonderful, and we do well to revel constantly in the glory of their wonderfulness. But of all the wonders of Creation, Christ is the most wonderful of all. Using the same word, the Psalmist prays (119:18)—

“Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold WONDROUS THINGS out of Thy law.”

Let that be our constant search and desire. It is wholesome, and purifying, and beautifying, and productive of great joy.

“. . . COUNSELLOR . . .” (v. 6).

That is, Guide, Teacher, Instructor, Advisor. How great is this need! And how perfectly he fills it!—not only the Perfect Teacher, but the Perfect Example of his own teaching. Let us realize how much we need teaching in everything: how little we know at very best, how little we are able alone to direct our own way in wisdom and well-being.

His being Counsellor is inseparably related to his being the Word made flesh. *All* the Word is about him, and centers wholly around him. We find him in a multitude of ways on all its pages. Here is where we learn of him, and get to know him, and are “counselled” by him.

“. . . THE MIGHTY GOD . . .” (v. 6).

We need have no difficulty with this title. It is the essential foundation. His Name would be incomplete without this aspect. There are two considerations that explain it—

1. The term “God” (Ail or El in the original) is applied by God to others than Christ, as Christ himself pointed out from the Psalms in defending its application to himself (Psa. 82:1, 6)

“God (Elohim) judgeth among the gods (elohim) . . . I (God) have said that ye (Israel) are gods (elohim), and all of you are children of the Most High.”

2. But the second consideration (actually related to the first, but of specific and unique application to Christ) is the most relevant here: he was *Immanuel*—“God with us”—

“God was manifest in the flesh . . . God was IN Christ . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”

(1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19; Jn. 14:9).

This manifestation is an essential part of his glorious Name.

“ . . . *THE EVERLASTING FATHER* . . . ” (v. 6).

This should be “Father of the Future,” or “Father of Eternity.” The Hebrew is Abi-Ad. He is Father of all Future Eternity in that all springs from him. He laid the foundation in his perfect life and death, and so opened the way for the future. He alone was worthy and able to open the Seals of the Divine Plan of the Ages (Rev. 5:5). Without him, there could have been no future. And *individually*, without him *no one* has any future. He is the “Beginning of the (New) Creation” (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15).

“*THE PRINCE OF PEACE* . . . ” (v. 6).

His culminating title. He is Prince of Peace in every sense, truly. External, universal, calm, tranquil peace on earth: all nature and all mankind in perfect harmonious accord. But far more than that, he is Prince of the Peace of God that passeth all understanding, the inner Peace, the Perfect Peace—

“Great peace have they which love Thy law . . . Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee” (Psa. 119:165; Isa. 26:3).

“Be careful—concerned, anxious, worried, troubled—for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, SHALL keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

—for he is the Prince of Peace.

“The zeal of Yahweh of hosts WILL perform this” (v. 7).

(Taken from “Be Ye Transformed” Volume 2 pages 111-124 by Bro. G. Growcott)